

PROFESSOR LOOFS ON "WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS?"

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DR. Friedrich Loofs, well known in Germany as Professor of Church History in the University of Halle-Wittenberg, as second only to Harnack in mastery of the development of Christian doctrine, and as the author of a number of technical works on various recondite questions in dogmatics and criticism, has enriched the growing literature of the Jesus-Question with a volume of 240 pages, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, and consisting of six Haskell Lectures delivered between the 26th of September and the 4th of October, 1911, under the auspices of the Theological Department, at Oberlin College.

The lectures are pleasingly written, temperate in tone, reasonably fair though often seriously inadequate in statement, and comprehensive though of necessity painfully sketchy in treatment. Such themes as "Jesus a Real Man of Our History," "The Liberal Jesus-Picture," "The Liberal Jesus-Research," "Jesus not Merely a Man," "The Ancient Christology Untenable," "Modern Forms of Christology," can not be satisfactorily handled each in an hour, in 40 small and double-ledged pages. The hearers must have left the hall, as the reader lays down the book, with an unsatisfied feeling, as if they had been regaled with specimen morsels rather than sated with a full meal. Nevertheless, the work is in many ways worth observation, and the adherents of the new criticism must be especially grateful to the author, to the authorities of Oberlin, and to the enterprising publishers who have brought it out.

For it is not only the word of a very competent scholar and high authority, but of an honest and candid man, who is trying hard to be just even to views with which he is least sympathetic. The English reader of this very readable book will find it pervaded by a spirit

of frankness and of open-mindedness that can hardly fail to be refreshing, though at times it may make his breathing none too easy. In particular, he will soon become aware that of late something has occurred that has not transpired, something of which only very garbled accounts may have hitherto reached him. He will quickly see that he may have been relying upon a press rather closely censored, and he will learn to understand as well as to admire the art of the powers that be, which consists (as H. J. Holtzmann expressed it in a written communication to the present writer) in "going straight ahead as if nothing had happened." Such self-control is indeed wonderful.

The titles of the six lectures, already quoted, indicate clearly enough the general movement of the author's thought. In the first he rejects "the American's" theory of the purely divine Jesus¹—on what grounds we shall soon see. In the second he discusses and shatters the "liberal Jesus-Figure," sketched with such seductive pencil by Theodor Keim, perfected with such exhaustive knowledge and such painstaking skill by Heinrich Julius Holtzmann. The third lecture and the fourth continue the discussion of "Liberal Jesus-Research and the Sources" and contend for the thesis, "Jesus not merely a Man." The fifth lecture returns to "the American," who is declared "wrong in his assumption of a purely divine Jesus, who never lived the life of a human being," but "right in saying that liberal Jesus-Research . . . has not succeeded in sketching a picture of Jesus which does justice to the sources and is credible as it stands," and "also right . . . in opposing the assumption itself that the life of Jesus must have been a purely human one." He then quotes at length from *Ecce Deus* (p. 6), where the dilemma is stated, "Jesus was either a deified man or a humanized God," the orthodox alternative, Jesus was a God-Man, being rejected as unthinkable and meaningless.

The last third of the book is given up to an attempt to escape between the horns of this dilemma, and the worth of the whole book, as a positive contribution to the settlement of "the great question," must depend upon the fate of this attempt. For if Professor Loofs cannot actually effect this escape, then he must either refuse to think on the subject or else he must accept one horn of the dilemma. But which? The reasons against the first, the "liberal" horn, have been set forth in three chapters, 120 pages. They are already familiar to all readers of *Ecce Deus*, and they will wait a long time for any half-satisfactory answer. The reasons against the second horn

¹ See the writer's *Ecce Deus*, Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1912.

are set forth in three pages (36-38) and consist solely of an appeal to the Pauline Witness! Bravely as he speaks about it, bold though the front he assumes, it seems hardly questionable, in case his flight between the horns be arrested, that Professor Loofs would throw over these three pages and save the three chapters, that he would promptly accept a humanized God rather than a deified man.

But is the attempted escape successful? Loofs begins by showing carefully that all such essays have failed hitherto. "The ancient Christology untenable"—such is the burden of the fifth lecture. The sixth and last lecture passes in review the "modern forms of Christology." He pays his respects to the rock-ribbed orthodoxy of Philippi, to the widely accepted kenotic theory, to such off-shoots as Kunze, Schaeder, Seeberg; he returns to Schleiermacher and Ritschl, and finally issues upon his own colleague, the late Martin Kaehler, and Professor Wendt of Jena. He handles very tenderly these later views, without the shedding of blood. "To every layman to whom this formula seems intelligible, we ought therefore to say: Be content with it" (p. 238). But he does not disguise the fact that though the formula may be good enough for the "layman," it is not good enough for our author. What then remains? "My last refuge, therefore, is the term which Paul strongly emphasizes in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, the *mystery of Christ*. . . . It would be attempting impossible things if we tried to understand the historical person of Christ." This on page 240, the penultimate page of the book, only 31 lines from the end. So then Professor Loofs wisely gives it up. He sees clearly that there is no exit between the horns. The pass is an *impasse*. He makes no attempt to escape. But neither does he accept either horn. He merely wraps his face in his mantle, bows his head, and sits quietly between, murmuring for consolation the great line of Goethe: "Thou equalest the spirit whom thou comprehendest."

Such then is the result to which this vigorous thinker is led, or rather driven, by 240 pages of argumentation exploiting immeasurable resources of erudition. He rejects the only two hypotheses that can be made "intelligible," and he reposes finally in the absolutely incomprehensible! Herewith does he not range himself side by side with Tertullian, who declared, "The Son of God hath died,—it is wholly credible, because it is preposterous" (*ineptum*)? And has not history passed judgment upon the African and his obscurantism? It is not easy to realize the immense significance of this position so deliberately taken by the Halle professor. It is the despair of the human mind. Christianity is the greatest historical

phenomenon of which we have any knowledge. The spirit of man demands imperiously that it be understood. Generations of the brightest intellects have consecrated themselves with supreme devotion to the solution of this riddle. Now comes Professor Loofs and declares that it is all in vain, all in vain. We do not know, we shall not know. The whole thing is at heart a mystery. We can do no more than believe, like little children. We are babes in the church and remain babes forever.

It is very hard to see what advantage there is in this position over that of the most submissive Romanist. What profit is there in knowing a thousand things about history and the world, if this pivotal thing is to remain shrouded in impenetrable mystery? In what sense can we be said to know any of them, unless we know this from which they radiate, on which they converge? The simple fact is that all history is made unintelligible by leaving this fact unexplained. What does it signify to express all the symbols of our equation in the neatest forms, if every such expression contains an unknown and unknowable x ?

Some one may possibly object that such is after all the final issue of all our strivings, that some unknown and unknowable element must enter into all our solutions, that some mystery must always lie at the heart of the universe. One might easily mention some conspicuous thinkers and authors to whom such an objection would seem very natural.

In a certain sense the case is even as stated, but not in any sense available for the objector. The lines are far from parallel; they are nearer perpendicular to each other. The inexplicables of thought are ultimates. They allow no analysis, but they are universal. They lie in the recesses of our common nature. They pervade the whole system of things, they are the connective tissue of the universe. They belong alike to all time and all space, if indeed they be not themselves both timeless and spaceless.

As different as possible is the alleged incomprehensibility of the Jesus. Here (it is said) was a strictly historical phenomenon, perfectly definite in time as well as in space, conditioned in every way as any other fact of history, in all respects a sharer of the common lot—and yet (we are told) wholly different from all others, never to be understood by any human mind, unique, with no parallel in any clime or time, *a mystery, a miracle*, forever unintelligible!

Any fair-minded man must admit that such an incomprehensibility bears no sort of resemblance to the ultimates, the irresoluble moments of philosophic or scientific theory. It is the peculiarity and

the estimable worth of these latter that they are omnipresent, that all things are to be expressed through them and in terms of them, they themselves remaining not so expressible. But the distinction of this supposed individual historic fact, whereon Loofs insists most strenuously and frequently, is its *uniqueness*.² As so unique it cannot enter into history, into the statement of all the processes of humanity in terms of common elements, which belong to us all alike.

Surely any dispassionate intelligence will confess, nor can we think that Loofs would deny, that the admission of such a "unique" factor to a place in the historical movement, under all the definite conditions, can not help forward any rational interpretation of history, but must rather render any such interpretation forever impossible. Surely then, no scientific mind would admit such a factor unless compelled, unless under the sternest constraint of facts certain, demonstrable, and wholly unequivocal. If there should be even a slight possibility of some other interpretation, we should have to accept this latter as infinitely more probable than the extremely violent hypothesis that stops all thinking.

It becomes then a burning question: What are these sure, stringent, unambiguous proofs of the utter uniqueness of this historic phenomenon? The answer of the Halle historian is twofold. First, it is held that Jesus has affected humanity and the course of events as no other personality. It is only under extreme duress that such a learned and able thinker can advance such a reason in full seriousness. What man has affected history in quite the same manner as Socrates, as Cæsar, as Galilei, as Newton, as Napoleon, as many another? The extent and character of an explosion depends not solely upon the match applied, but also in large measure upon the magazine ignited, its nature and amount. What other epoch in recorded time has presented such a set of conditions as the first century of our era around the Mediterranean? When for the first time in history the three greatest strains of blood on this earth were poured together under the Roman peace, at the moment of the fullest bloom of ancient civilization, is it strange that the profoundest religious conviction, the furthest reaching and most comprehensive religio-philosophical movement, should involve the deepest, broadest, and most thoroughgoing transformation of society and transvaluation of ideals and of life? The effect seems not at all disproportion-

² It is noteworthy in this connection that Klostermann, the peer of Loofs, finds it necessary to reject by name this uniqueness as a "rusty weapon, on which most of us have relied, which must be cast aside into the corner."

tioned to the cause, and the wonder would have been if the results had been less significant.

But a second reason alleged for the superhumanity of the "historical Jesus" is that the individual Christian consciousness immediately perceives and knows him to be superhuman. At this point it is necessary to divide, if we would conquer or even think clearly. Professor Loofs has no trouble whatever in showing (what is clearly set forth in *Ecce Deus*) that the early, that the very earliest, Christian consciousness recognized Jesus as divine. In fact, the worship of Jesus as God is writ so large over all the New Testament, over all the apostolic and post-apostolic age, that to prove it is to point out the sun at noon. Neither is early Christian history in any measure intelligible, if we omit this central and regulative principle. It becomes at once a *miracle* and a *mystery* on the hypothesis of the pure-human Jesus. Loofs then is entirely right in saying, "The assumption that the life of Jesus was a purely human one is disproved by the sources"—where we may extend the "sources" quite through the second and even far into the third century. But this clear thinker himself falls into hopeless mist and obscurity when he adds, "and by the experiences of believers in all ages" (p. 201). Such experiences, no matter what they may be, can neither prove nor disprove anything of the kind whatever. One need not be an expert psychologist, nor even a psychopathist "in no wise prejudiced," to recognize that our author's conclusion is wholly unwarranted. There is no "variety of religious experience" that can testify beyond itself or prove anything about its object of worship. We raise no question about what these "experiences" may have really been. We may grant everything whatever that may be claimed. Yea, multiply the claims by a thousand, and we may grant them just as readily. Even though "the love of Jesus" should instantaneously convert the vilest sinner into a saint, the fact would still be irrelevant. It would prove at most only the regenerative efficacy of a certain form of belief, it would be utterly dumb concerning the object of that belief. The whole phenomenon would be subjective and would bear no witness to anything beyond the subject. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac may testify most eloquently, impressively, pathetically to the faith of Abraham, but it tells us nothing whatever about the nature or being of "Jehovah." We may accept the "Fioretti" and everything else related of its hero and his sheeplets as thoroughly authentic, and thereby learn a great deal about Francis d'Assisi and Friars James and Giles and "a whole forest of such Junipers,"—but nothing at all about the Jesus.

Professor Loofs may, then, very properly examine the sources to find out what the early Christians *thought* of the Jesus. And that indeed is not only a proper inquiry, but the only proper inquiry, in the premises. Yet it is entirely illegitimate to attempt to pass from what they *thought* or *felt* about the Jesus, over to some conclusion about what the Jesus really was. It is easy to see what has betrayed this keen logician into this logical lapse. It is the false assumption of the preceding sentence: "We have seen that Jesus was a man who lived in this world of ours" (p. 201). Now the fact is that "we have seen" nothing of the kind. If indeed the historical character of Jesus were indubitably established, or with practical certainty, or even with very high probability, then might Professor Loofs raise the question as to whether such a *proved* historical figure could be understood as a mere man. But he has not proved that "Jesus was a man," he has not even begun to prove it. Nay, confessedly, *it cannot be proved*.

Let any one read Professor Klostermann's recent work on *Die neuesten Angriffe auf die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*; let him notice how the Strassburg critic surrenders unconditionally the "pillars" of Schmiedel, how he relegates to the corner the hitherto trusted but no longer trustworthy weapons (see footnote 2), how he admits that "new and doughtier weapons will have to be forged," how he himself in the *Vorwort* declines to enter the lists against "these opponents."

Even this is not all. In a very recent and exceedingly circum-spect and learned work of Loof's countryman, Carl Noll,³ a preacher addressing preachers, it is distinctly and repeatedly admitted that the historical character, which "we have seen," can not be proved and can not be seen at all. He distinctly says (p. 46) that the historicity of Jesus "can be neither proved nor refuted by the methods of science."⁴ Similarly also on p. 4 of *Der Kampf um die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*.

Still more recently the conspicuous theologian, Albert Schweitzer, in the second edition of his famous *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, not only devotes two chapters (121 pages) solely to the "historicity," but in the end claims only that it is "altogether probable" and the "unhistoricity altogether improbable." He alleges no better reasons than Professor Loofs, but adds that the new hy-

³ Similarly the preacher, Peisker, in his more recent work on the same theme.

⁴ "Wenn man überhaupt an der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu festhält—sie lässt sich wissenschaftlich weder beweisen noch widerlegen."

potheses are mutually contradictory and annul each other—an argument that Klostermann more wisely refuses to advance. As if the fallacies of circle-squarers could discredit the theorems of geometry!

When such concessions are made in such quarters, when it is emphatically conceded that “the historicity of Jesus can not be proved,” it is plain that the matter is most serious, and that the defenders of tradition are logically and *morally* responsible to the countless multitudes they guide, to produce, and to produce immediately, the very best and most carefully weighed reasons that can be urged in favor of the “historicity” that has admittedly been called so successfully in question—or else to acknowledge openly that the traditional standpoint is no longer tenable.

Inasmuch then as all our author's arguments for the necessity of supposing the Jesus to have been a mysterious, unique, and finally incomprehensible person, God-intoxicated and incommensurable with any other son of man, repose avowedly upon the premise “we have seen that Jesus was a man,” it now becomes indispensable to ask where “we have seen” this, and what is the proof that “Jesus . . . lived in this world of ours,” as Professor Loofs does not weary in affirming and reaffirming. Since this then is the pivot on which the whole argument turns, the reader will naturally and justly expect to find it treated with especial care; but he will be sorely disappointed. Strangely enough, Professor Loofs devotes some 15 pages (17-31) to such trifles as the forged correspondence of Jesus with Abgar the Black, of Edessa, the apocryphal report of Pilate, the letter of Mara, Serapion's son, to his son Serapion, the interpolated passages in Josephus, the word reported of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, that he met a disciple of Jeshu ha-Nôtzri, and the passages in Tacitus and Pliny—only in the end to “concede” (p. 31) “that the historicity of Christ can not be conclusively proved by the non-Christian sources.” One marvels what may be the use of producing witnesses he himself discredits. Certainly naught is gained, but is there not something lost? The admitted forgeries and interpolations had one and only one object in view, namely, to underprop the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus. But why resort to such sinister support? *If he really was historical, is it not passing strange that so extremely little evidence thereof was preserved, when evidence must have existed in such profusion, passing strange that there arose the apparent necessity of inventing it wholesale?* What genuinely historical character is found in similar plight?

Once more, one would think that Professor Loofs would make some show of refuting the contentions of *Ecce Deus*, for which he

seems to cherish some generous respect. Mehlhorn is not ashamed to avow that they must chiefly occupy the attention of "us defenders of the historicity" for years to come, and Loofs himself joins in regarding them as "most remarkable." But he makes no attempt at confutation, he expressly declines to undertake such a disagreeable task. On the contrary, he contents himself (perhaps not all his readers) with an ostensible direct proof of the historicity—in three pages (36-38)! Surely a short cut to such an important result. Strange that Noll, Schmiedel, and others should have overlooked it. What is this short shrift for the sceptics? Simply and solely an appeal to the Pauline Witness, especially to 1 Cor. xi. 23 ff. (the Last Supper), to xv. 3 f. (the Resurrection); to ix. 5 (brothers of the Lord); to Gal. i. 19 (James the brother of the Lord); to Gal. iii. 16 (seed of Abraham), and to iv. 4 (made of a woman and made under the Law).

Mainly, it would seem, he relies upon these "brethren of the Lord," whose "existence suffices to wreck the fantastic edifice of W. B. Smith in spite of all his learning." And yet even Professor Loofs has hardly played this argument for all it is worth, for he neglects to mention that the New Testament knows not merely of "these brothers," but also of "Elymas, son of Jesus." He forgets also to record among the proofs that "the Gospels know them" (these "brothers of the Lord") the eloquent passage (Matt. xii. 49 f.; Mark iii. 34) "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (which seems aimed directly at the historicists); and (John xx. 17 f.) "But go unto my brethren and. . . Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples." It is in connection with this scriptural interpretation of "brethren" that Loofs has generously defended Smith against the shrewd suspicion of being "psychopathic," as he seemed to "a specialist in nervous diseases." Thanks awfully! A very classic and approved way of refuting an opponent, to say "He hath a devil," more than once adopted against *Ecce Deus*.

Seriously, however, it seems strange that our author should merely refer to the Pauline witness without a word of discussion, seeing that the passages in question have been minutely and to many minds convincingly treated in *Ecce Deus* and elsewhere, with results very sharply opposed to his complacent assumption. Still stranger that so circumspect a thinker should seek to balance the colossal fabric of Christian dogma on such a pin-point of argument as this contention that "brother(s) of the Lord" *must* mean physical broth-

ers of Jesus, especially in oriental writings, where the use of such terms is notoriously loose and figurative.

In the beginning of Book V of the Apostolic Constitutions, which treats of martyrs, we read: "He that is condemned for the name of the Lord God is an holy martyr, a brother of the Lord, the Son of the Highest, a receptacle of the Holy Spirit." Now in Acts xii. 2 it is stated that Herod "took off James the brother of John with a sword." This is said to have happened "about that season." Wendt wisely concludes that the writer knew "nothing accurate" about the matter, hence his brevity and indefiniteness. Still another martyrdom of a James is recorded, and this one is supposed to have been "James the Lord's brother." The subject has been treated in *Ecce Deus* (pp. 234-8) as well as elsewhere and needs no repeated discussion here. The only point now to be emphasized is that the name of James is particularly and doubly associated with early martyrdom, and that any such martyr is declared in standard Christian diction (no matter how figurative) to be a "brother of the Lord." Is it not remarkable that the same James should be "brother of the Lord" in these two senses? If some one says that Paul calls James "brother of the Lord" before his martyrdom, the answer is that no one knows this; the dates in the case are altogether uncertain.

It has been objected by Kampmeier that I have taken the phrase "my" or "his brethren" in two opposite senses, namely, as designating a circle of believers and also as designating unbelievers, his racial brethren, the Jews. Well, what of it? Is it strange that words should be used by different authors, or even by the same author under different conditions, in different senses? And is it not a fact that the words *actually are* used thus diversely and opposedly? In John xx. 17-18 "brethren" *certainly* means "disciples," at least so it was understood by Mary Magdalene. In John vii. 5 just as certainly it does *not* mean "disciples," for "neither did his brethren believe in him." The only question is, who were these unbelieving brethren? Undoubtedly not his spiritual or figurative brethren, undoubtedly then in *some* other sense his brethren. The historicists answer, "his fleshly kinsmen," whether brothers or cousins makes no difference. But this is not necessary. It is quite possible, and in view of the general symbolic mode of Gospel speech it is far more plausible, to understand the term of the Jews in general, as a religious body. As Jerome speaks of "the members of the church at Jerusalem" as "the sons of his mother," with at least equal propriety can we speak of Judaism as his *mother* since it was from the marriage of Judaism and Hellenism that the great idea

of the Saviour-God Jesus was born; in which case nothing would be more natural than to speak of the Jews who rejected the Jesus as his unbelieving brethren. This interpretation seems to meet all the facts in the case, all the testimony of the "sources." He who thinks it so forced and unnatural as to suggest a "psychopathic" condition, is merely advertising his own poverty of imagination and his unfamiliarity with oriental modes of thought and expression.

In conclusion, let me appeal to the open-minded reader to consider carefully the account of "James the Just" as quoted from the post-apostolic Hegesippus (A. D. 180?) by Eusebius (*H. E.*, II, 23, 4-18) and then to ask himself the question, "Does Hegesippus regard James as the fleshly brother of Jesus?" True, the account as quoted opens thus: "James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government etc." But Eusebius in quoting did not understand that James was really thus blood-related to Jesus, for he speaks of him as "one of those called brethren of the Saviour" (*H. E.* 1, 12, 4) and elsewhere (II, 1, 2) declares, "This James was called the brother of the Lord because he was known as the son of Joseph." Moreover, Clemens Alexandrinus does not think of "this James" as blood-brother of Jesus, for he says: "The Lord after his resurrection imparted knowledge to James the Just and to John and Peter, and they imparted it to the rest of the apostles, and the rest of the apostles to the seventy, of whom Barnabas was one. But there were two Jameses: one called the Just, who was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and was beaten to death with a club by a fuller, and another who was beheaded" (by Herod Agrippa, A. D. 44?). So quotes Eusebius (II, 1, 4) from the 7th book of the lost *Hypotyposes*. Here Clemens would seem to identify James the Just, "the brother of the Lord," with James the Apostle, son of Alphæus. Papias also in a preserved fragment (Routh, *Rel. Sac.*, I, p. 46) does likewise. It makes no difference whether they be right or wrong in this identification. The point is that they do *not* understand "brother of the Lord" to mean blood-brother of Jesus. The expression then is in itself not enough; it is not unambiguous. Bearing this in mind, let the reader peruse the Eusebian excerpt from Hegesippus. He will find no remotest hint that James was a kinsman of Jesus. He will find a minute description of the Just, which seems positively to shut out the notion that he was such a kinsman: "This man was holy from his mother's womb: wine and fermented liquor drank he not, nor flesh did eat; razor upon his head came not; with oil he did not anoint himself, and a bath did not use. Him alone it was allowed into the holies to

enter; for neither wools he wore, but linens. And alone he went into the temple and would be found down on his knees and begging forgiveness of the people, so that hardened were his knees like a camel's (through his always bending on his knees beseeching God, and begging forgiveness for the people). Yea, for the exceedingness of his justice (righteousness) he was called Just and Oblias, which is interpreted, "Bulwark of the people and Justice," as the prophets declare concerning him." Now we ask, will any ingenuity of exegesis, or any flight of imagination ever reconcile this description with any conception we can form of the brother of a Nazarene carpenter crucified in Jerusalem? It is not necessary to suppose that Hegesippus is quite correctly informed; but the general features suffice to shape our judgment. The improbability is greatly heightened by the narration that follows, wherein Hegesippus tells us that some of the seven sects of Jews asked this Just Oblias, "What is the gate of Jesus?" who answered that "he is the Saviour"; wherefore some "believed that Jesus is the Christ; but the sects aforementioned believed not, neither resurrection nor coming to give each according to his works." To stay the movement towards Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees then beseech Oblias with most flattering words not to let the Passover multitude go astray concerning Jesus; they also place him on the wing (pinnacle) of the temple, aloft, in the sight and hearing of all the people, and ask once more, "Just one, . . . what is the gate⁵ of Jesus?" He answers with mighty voice, "Why ask ye me concerning Jesus, the Son of man? He himself sitteth in the heaven on the right of the mighty power, and is going to come upon the clouds of heaven." Whereupon some believed and shouted Hosanna, but the Scribes and Pharisees went up and threw the Just one down, who was not killed by the fall but despatched by a fuller with his club.

It is impossible not to recognize in this account a rather crude work of fancy, but the point is that there is apparently no suspicion in the mind of the writer that this "Just one" was blood-brother of Jesus. Had he entertained such an idea, it seems very unlikely, almost incredible, that he should have written such an account. We also note that the whole conception of the character of this "Just one" is precisely in accord with the figurative interpretation of the phrase "Brother of the Lord." If Abraham was called "friend of

⁵ This "gate," it seems, must signify "way," which in the New Testament signifies doctrine, as in "the way of the Lord," which means the Christian propaganda.

God," there seems no reason why such a religious man as this James should not be called "brother of the Lord."

Viewed then from any and every point of the compass, this epithet of James the Just calls for a figurative interpretation. So much conceded, the rest is easy. The other New Testament phrases, "his brethren," "his sisters," even "his mother," and later still "his father," are all mere corollaries from the first, they are all readily derivable from the primitive error of mistaking a spiritual "brother of the Lord" for a carnal "brother of Jesus"; and this mistake is seen to be of a piece with the whole body of current New Testament misinterpretations.

Even if the passages⁶ in question could not be explained as satisfactorily as they have been, it would seem the part of prudence not to build such an imposing structure on a foundation so extremely narrow, accidental and artificial. Surely historicism would appear to be *in extremis* when its chosen champions risk its fate upon such equivocal attestation.

In conclusion, Professor Loofs excuses himself from attempting to disprove "the American's" interpretation of the Gospels on the ground that it "would require much time and afford little pleasure." Herein he is doubtless wise. Such attempted disproof would indeed promise immeasurable delight to the onlooker, to all the "vested interests" in ecclesiastical Christendom, yet for all that, "with half a world to hearten him for fight," it might prove excessively irksome to the disprover and disappointing to his friends.

On the whole, this work of the Halle historian has many great merits; not the least among them is the fact that it offers such frequent occasion to gather radical figs from conservative thistles.⁷

⁶ The proof-passages undiscussed in *Ecce Deus*, such as Gal. iii. 16; iv. 4; Rom. i. 3 ("To thy [Abraham's] seed, which is Christ," "born of woman, born under law," "born of seed of David, according to flesh"), might indeed well adorn the columns of a religious weekly, but scarcely become the pages of a volume by Professor Loofs;—they would seem to be thrown in merely as a bonus, or for good measure.

⁷ With apologies to Professor Harnack.